

MEMORANDUM

TO: Christie Daniels, WRA 210 Instructor
FROM: Elizabeth Oderkirk
DATE: January 27, 2014
RE: Module 3: Alumni Portfolio Interview Report

Overview

In this report, I discuss my interview with Hollyce (Holly) Balentine about her alumni portfolio. I summarize her answers, point to some positives and negatives about her portfolio that we discussed, and share the advice she gave me.

About Hollyce Balentine

Holly graduated from the Professional Writing program in 2012. As a student, she worked at the Michigan State University Physical Plant Division (now Infrastructure Planning and Facilities). As Media and Communications Assistant II, she started out as a social media monitor and the primary writer of the newsletter, then was transferred to more web-focused tasks. She helped to consolidate analytics reporting, implement and customize a content management system for their website, propose a website redesign, and more. She also volunteered at Martin Luther Chapel in East Lansing, where she implemented a social media strategy and co-founded and managed a quarterly newsletter, among other tasks.

Holly's Alumni Portfolio

Holly's portfolio is creative but professional. The titles of her content tabs reveal her skills and interests, while interesting fonts and a color scheme of blues, purples, and teals reflect her personality. She has not updated it in a while, but is hoping to do so soon. She even talked about completely redesigning it, implementing the skills she has now.

Portfolio Positives

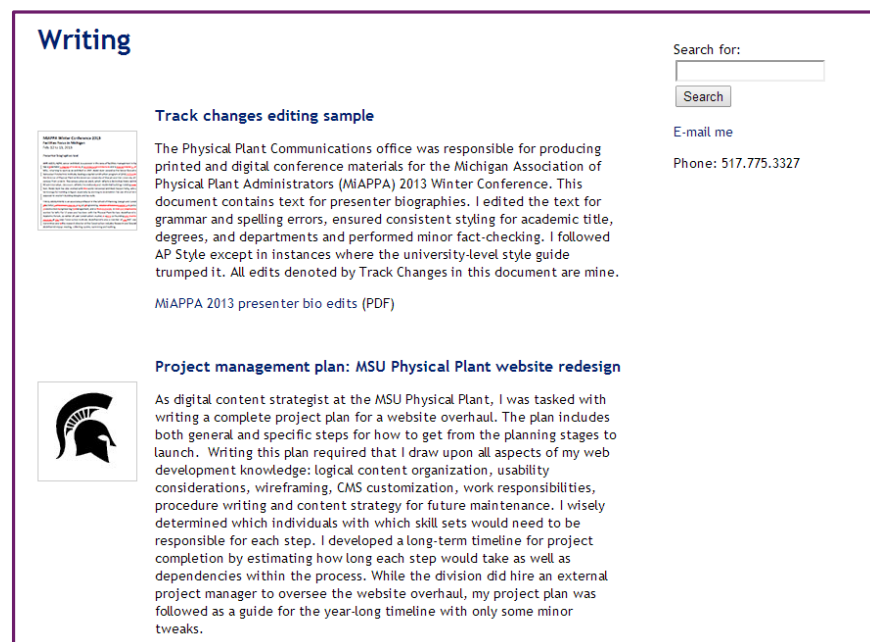
Holly's portfolio helped her during her job search after she graduated. She included the link for her portfolio on her resume so employers could review it before interviewing her, and she often received compliments and positive feedback. She told me during our interview that she felt her portfolio gave her an advantage over other applicants, since her employers knew more about her skills and talents before even meeting her.



Screen shot of home page

Portfolio Negatives

On the home page is an image derived of several action phrases in English and Spanish in different colors (see home page image above). While it adds colors and interest to the page, Holly and I decided we were not huge fans of it. There is



also supposed to be a Twitter feed on the right that shows on every page, but it has disappeared. If Holly had not mentioned it, I would not have even known that the space was supposed to be anything other than empty space. Another downfall of her portfolio is the

thumbnails pictured next to each of her portfolio pieces (see image). They are small and not clickable, so the subtitle has to be clicked on in order to see any of her samples. This directs the viewer to another page where a link to the PDF

document is located. Holly and I discussed how inefficient that is and what Holly wanted to do differently in order to eliminate the extra page.

Holly's Advice

Reflecting upon her experiences, Holly suggested that I think of every project and assignment as a possible portfolio piece. She also said I should keep an open mind about where my career path may lead. While I should still work towards my dream job as a fiction book editor, I might, after college, start off designing web pages or working as a full-time social media manager. Her final piece of advice was to turn my portfolio presentation into a story about how my Professional Writing shaped my experiences and culminated into a portfolio.